

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 SSO-00 NSCE-00 SS-15
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USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 1571
AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL BUKAVU

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, MILI, CG
SUBJECT: SHABA ATTACK: DEBRIEFING OF RICHARD E. BLACK, AMCIT
EVACUEE FROM KOLWEZI, MAY 22

1. SUMMARY: EMBOFFS DEBRIEFED RICHARD E. BLACK (AMCIT) ON MAY 22. BLACK AND HIS FIANCÉE HAD A SOMEWHAT LIMITED VIEW OF WHAT HAPPENED IN KOLWEZI SINCE THEY SPENT THEIR FIRST 2 AND A HALF DAYS HIDING IN THE HOTEL IMPALA WINE CELLAR AND THE REMAINDER OF THE WEEK IN THE FORMINIKA GENDARME BUILDING. FRENCH LEGIONNAIRES FREED THEM ON THE EVENING OF MAY 19. NEVERTHELESS, HE WAS ABLE TO PROVIDE INTERESTING DETAILS ON REBLE UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. BLACK WAS IN HIS ROOM IN THE IMPALA HOTEL WHEN HE FIRST HEARD FIRING AT ABOUT 0605 SATURDAY, MAY 13. HE AND HIS FIANCÉE MRS. HADFIZELD MADE THEIR WAY TO THE HOTEL WINE CELLAR WITH THE MANAGER AND HIS WIFE. FROM THE CELLAR THEY COULD SEE CONFIDENTIAL

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THROUGH THE VENTS TO THE OUTSIDE OF THE HOTEL, WHICH FELL TO THE REBELS AFTER ONLY 30 MINUTES OF FIGHTING. SHORTLY AFTERWARDS BLACK SAW THE REBELS LEAD THE FRENCH LIEUTENANT IN CHARGE OF THE PANHARD ADVISORY DETACHMENT OUT OF THE HOTEL. THE OFFICER WAS NOT ABUSED, AND ONE REBEL EVEN FOLLOWED HIM, CARRYING HIS UNIFORM ON A HANGAR AND HIS SWORD. THEN SOME 15 AFRICANS AND 15 EUROPEANS WERE MARCHED OUT. THIS REPRESENTED LESS THAN ONE

HALF OF THE PEOPLE STAYING AT THE HOTEL AT THAT TIME. BLACK HAD NO IDEA WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO THE OTHERS.

3. BLACK, HIS FIANCÉE AND THE OTHERS STAYED IN THE WINE CELLAR FOR TWO AND A HALF DAYS. THE REBELS SEVERAL TIMES ATTEMPTED TO BREAK DOWN THE DOOR AND ONCE TRIED TO SHOOT THE LOCK AWAY BUT MISSED. DECIDING AT LAST THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER TO SURRENDER THAN WAIT FOR THE REBELS TO BREAK IN SHOOTING, THEY TRIED TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE REBELS VIA WRITTEN NOTES PUSHED OUT THROUGH THE VENTS. UNFORTUNATELY, NONE OF THE REBELS WAS ABLE TO READ. BLACK THEN PERSUADED THE HOTEL MANAGER TO TALK WITH THE REBELS THROUGH THE DOOR SINCE HE COULD SPEAK SWAHILI, THE ONLY LANGUAGE THEY HEARD THE REBELS USING UP TO THAT TIME. (LATER THEY HEARD REBELS SPEAKING IN FRENCH AS WELL). THUS, THEY NEGOTIATED THEIR SURRENDER TO THE REBELS ON THE EVENING OF MAY 15. THE REBELS TOOK THEM TO THE FORNIKINA GENDARME HEADQUARTERS WHERE THEY WERE HELD UNTIL FREED BY FRENCH LEGIONNAIRES ON MAY 19.

4. BLACK EMPHASIZED THAT DURING MOST OF THEIR "CAPTIVITY" THEY WERE REASONABLY WELL-TREATED. HE FOUND THE REBELS WERE SYMPATHETIC, ALTHOUGH WHEN THEY WERE FIRST MOVED BLACK TOOK THE PRECAUTION OF KEEPING HIMSELF AND HIS FIANCÉE IN THE MIDST OF THE REBELS SO THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO SUDDENLY OPEN FIRE. ON AT LEAST TWO OCCASIONS THE REBELS, OR ELEMENTS OF THE REBELS, IN FACT, PROTECTED BLACK AND OTHER EUROPEANS FROM ZAIRIAN CIVILIANS OR OTHER REBELS. ON MAY 18, BLACK SAID THAT REBEL

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SOLDIERS WERE ANGRY AND HAD THREATENED THEM. THE REBEL MAJOR (NAME UNKNOWN) REASSURED MS. HADFIZELD, AND ORDERED THE CHIEF OF THE GUARD TO PROTECT HER AND THE OTHERS. A SECOND INCIDENT OCCURRED ON MAY 19. WHEN FRENCH PARATROOPERS DROPPED ON KOLWEZI. ACCORDING TO BLACK, THE ZAIRIAN POPULATION AT FIRST MISTOOK THE PARATROOPERS FOR CUBANS. THE PEOPLE BEGAN TO SHOUT REPEATEDLY, "THE CUBANS* WE'RE FREE*" THEY THEN ATTEMPTED TO BREAK INTO THE JAIL AND ATTACK THE EUROPEANS HELD THERE. HOWEVER, THE REBEL GUARDS WERE ABLE TO STOP THEM. SOON REALIZING THAT IT WAS THE FRENCH DROPPING INSTEAD OF THE CUBANS, THE PEOPLE QUICKLY FELL SILENT AND DISPERSED.

5. THE REBELS CLAIMED THEIR GOAL WAS TO LIBERATE THE ZAIRIANS AND TO PUNISH THE PEOPLE'S "OPPRESSORS." THEY STATED THAT THEY DID NOT WANT TO HURT AFRICANS, ALTHOUGH THEY HAD REPORTEDLY COMMITTED ATROCITIES IN THE AFRICAN QUARTERS. THEY DID TRY TO ESTABLISH SOME LAW AND ORDER, FOR EXAMPLE, ARRESTING A ZAIRIAN FOR STEALING A TELEVISION SET. THE ACCUSED WAS "KNOCKED AROUND A LITTLE" BUT ALSO HAD 7 ZAIRES RETURNED TO HIM WHICH THE REBELS HAD TAKEN. THE REBELS LOOTED FREELY, ALTHOUGH BLACK FELT THEY WERE "EXTREMELY WELL DISCIPLINED FOR AN AFRICAN ARMY." THEY TOOK PRIMARILY WATCHES, EYE GLASSES AND BOOTS (MOST HAD APPARENTLY

ARRIVED IN KOLWEZI BAREFOOT) AND EVERYTHING ELSE WAS GIVEN TO THE PEOPLE WHO OFTEN JOINED IN THE LOOTING.

6. BLACK BELIEVES THAT THE REBELS HAD A PREPARED "WANT" LIST OF EUROPEANS AND OTHERS, AND THAT KEN ENRIGHT (AMCIT METHODIST MISSIONARY PILOT) WAS QUITE POSSIBLY NUMBER 1 ON IT. BLACK HEARD THAT ONE PERSON HAD BEEN MISTAKEN FOR ENRIGHT AND KILLED. ALSO, HE PERSONALLY SAW THE REBELS DRAG A BELGIAN FROM THE JAIL IN THE BELIEF THAT HE WAS ENRIGHT. AMONG THE ZAIRIANS ARRESTED WAS AN ELDERLY ZARIAN FEMALE WITCH DOCTOR ACCUSED OF HELPING THE ZAIRIAN ARMY WITH HER MAGIC, AND A ZAIRIAN MAN IN HIS MID-THIRTIES, OFFESE UNKNOWN. THE MAN APPARENTLY BELIEVED THE REBELS HAD SUFFICIENT REASON ALREADY TO KILL HIM AND SOON LAUNCHED INTO A PRO-MOBUTU SPEECH INCLUDING ATTACKS ON EVERY IMAGINABLE OPPONENT

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TO THE REGIME. BOTH HE AND THE WOMAN WERE BEATEN BY THE REBELS AND PROMISED A DAWN SHOOTING. THEY WERE NOT SHOT AT DAWN BUT LATER DISAPPEARED FROM THE JAIL; ULTIMATE FATE UNKNOWN.

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7. MOST OF THE REBELS WERE DRESSED IN CAMOUFLAGE UNIFORMS WITH

A CURIOUS PATTERN OF NARROW, GENERALLY VERTICAL CAMOUFLAGING STRIPES. A FRENCH CORRESPONDENT LATER TOLD BLACK THESE WERE EAST GERMAN UNIFORMS. ALL THE REBLES WORE TIGER PATCHES, DESCRIBED AS A FULL TIGER'S BODY AND THE WORD "TIGER" ABOVE. HE SAW NO ARMED CIVILIANS, ALTHOUGH CIVILIANS OFTEN ACCOMPANIED THE REBLES AND THE PEOPLE IN GENERAL "LOVED THEM." BLACK ALSO SAW INDIVIDUALS DRESSED IN FAZ UNIFORMS WITH THE REBELS BUT BELIEVED THESE WERE CIVILIANS WHO HAD STOLEN UNIFORMS AND FAZ WEAPONS IN ORDER TO JOIN THE REBELS, AS THE UNIFORMS WERE EXTREMELY ILL-FITTING AND THEY WORE NO WEBBING OR OTHER EQUIPMENT. THE REBLES ASKED FAZ SOLDIERS TO JOIN THEM AND BLACK WAS CERTAIN THAT SOME VOLUNTEERED TO DO SO.

8. THE WEAPONS BLACK IDENTIFIED AS USED BY THE REBELS INCLUDED:
RIFLES - ENFIELD, CANADIAN ENFIELD, 1903 SPRINGFIELD, AND BOLT ACTION MAUSERS; AUTOMATIC WEAPONS -- BELGIAN FNS (THE MOST COMMON WEAPON), AK 47S (SECOND MOST COMMON), ISRAELI UZI SUBMACHINE GUNS, WORLD WAR II BROWNING AUTOMATIC RIFLES (BAR), AND EAST
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EUROPEAN AND CHINESE MACHINE PISTOLS. BLACK NOTED ALMOST ALL THE OFFICERS WORE SIDEARMS -- APPARENTLY 7 AND 9 MM AUTOMATIC PISTOLS. HE ALSO IDENTIFIED 3 PEOPLE OUT OF THE 100 ODD REBELS HE SAW WHO CARRIED SMALL BAZOOKA TYPE WEAPONS. ROCKET WAS ABOUT 3 FEET TALL, WITH FOLDING FINS. THE WARHEAD EXTENDED IN FRONT OF THE SMALL LAUNCHING TUBE WHEN LOADED INTO POSITION. BLACK HEARD A LOT OF BOMBING AND EXPLOSIONS FROM UNKNOWN SOURCES -- POSSIBLY FROM GRENADES AND "BAZOOKAS," ALTHOUGH HE SAW NO ACTUAL BLASTS. HE BELIEVED THAT THE REBELS HAD LOTS OF AMMUNITION ALTHOUGH HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THEY HAD ARRIVED ON FOOT VIA ZAMBIA.

9. BLACK HAD TWO ENCOUNTERS WITH INDIVIDUAL REBELS WHICH SEEMED ESPECIALLY SIGNIFICANT. ONE WAS WITH THE REBEL MAJOR (PARA 4) COMMANDING THE MONIKA AREA OF KOLWEZI. PRESUMABLY ZAIRIAN (KATANGAN) HE WAS SLIGHTLY TALLER THAN MOST OF THE REBELS, BEARDED WITH PERHAPS A FEW GREY WHISKERS. HE APPEARED TO BE IN HIS FORTIES AND PROJECTED A FATHERLY IMAGE. HE WAS CLEARLY IN COMMAND AND CONCERNED THAT HIS TROOPS NOT UNNECESSARILY HARM EUROPEANS IN REBEL CUSTODY. THE SECOND ENCOUNTER OCCURRED ON MAY 17. A REBEL, IN FULL TIGER BATTALION UNIFORM, VISITED THE JAIL. HE WAS KNOWN TO TWO ITALIAN CIS EMPLOYEES ALSO BEING HELD THERE AND HAD WORKED FOR THEM UNTIL THE DAY BEFORE THE REBEL ATTACK. HE LIKED HIS FORMER EMPLOYERS AND HAD COME TO HAVE THEM FREED.

10. BLACK WAS ABLE TO SHED FURTHER LIGHT UPON ONE REPORTED MASSACRE WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS HAVING TAKEN PLACE IN A "HOUSE." HE MET SOME OF THE BELGIAN SURVIVORS WHEN THEY WERE BROUGHT TO THE JAIL. WHEN THE FAZ PARAS RETURNED TO THE CITY MAY 17, THEY ASSEMBLED THE EUROPEANS IN THIS HOUSE IN PRE-

PARATION FOR AN EVACUATION. BEFORE THE PEOPLE COULD BE MOVED,
A REBEL COUNTER-ATTACK FORCED FAZ BACK AND AT LEAST SOME ZAIRIANS
RETREATED INTO THE HOUSE. UP UNTIL THIS TIME BOTH SIDES HAD
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CAREFULLY AVOIDED FIRING INTO THE HOUSES IN THE AREA AND SIMPLY FOUGHT BETWEEN THEM. NOW THE REBELS ASSAULTED THE HOUSE WITH GRENADES AND AUTOMATIC WEAPONS. AFTER RECAPTURING THE HOUSE THEY PROCEEDED TO KILL ALL OF THOSE IN THE HOUSE WHO HAD BEEN WOUNDED. APPARENTLY THIS WAS THEIR PRACTICE THROUGHOUT THE FIGHTING IN KOLWEZI EVEN FOR THEIR OWN WOUNDED. THE FEW WHO SURVIVED WERE THOSE WHO HAD BEEN PROTECTED BY THE BODIES OF THE OTHER VICTIMS. THESE WERE ESCORTED FROM THE HOUSE BY THE REBELS (WHO PROTECTED THEM AGAINST OTHER REBELS) TO THE JAIL WHERE BLACK SAW THEM.

11. SEVERAL MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS MADE BY BLACK WERE ALSO OF INTEREST. HE INSISTS THAT HE SAW NO CUBANS NOR MET ANYONE WHO SAW ANY CUBANS. AT SOME POINT EARLY IN THE WEEK AN AMMUNITION MAGAZINE IN THE FORMINIKA GENDARME HQ REPORTEDLY EXPLODED WHEN A REBEL DROPPED A LIGHTED CIGARETTE. THIS OCCURRED BEFORE BLACK AND PARTY WERE MOVED INTO THE BUILDING. THE REBELS USED ALL OF THE VEHICLES THEY COULD FIND OPERABLE. MOST WERE LATER ABANDONED AND APPARENTLY MADE INOPERABLE, OFTEN BY REMOVING A COMPLETE WHEEL AND TIRE. BLACK HAD HIGH PRAISE THE THE FRENCH LEGIONNAIRES, WHOM HE SAID "SAVED A LOT OF LIVES." HIS FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THEM WAS ON THE EVENING OF MAY 19. WHEN FIVE LEGIONNAIRES LIBERATED THE JAIL. HIS PARTY STAYED WITH THE LEGIONNAIRES THAT NIGHT AND HE DESCRIBED THEM AS RELAXED AND VERY EAGER FOR COMBAT. THE LEGIONNAIRES MADE IT QUITE CLEAR THAT THEY FELT THE CIVILIANS TO BE AN ANNOYING ENCUMBRANCE, AND WERE EVEN RESENTFUL OF THE ADDITIONAL LEGIONNAIRES WHO ARRIVED MAY 20, WHOM THEY CONSIDERED COMPETITION.

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